

through some important decision. Such an absence often deprived the parliament of the legally required quorum of three-fourths of the deputies, and as a result decisions could not be made. The number of deputies in the Majlis was only 136. Thus, determined action of at least 35 deputies could prevent the parliament from acting at decisive moments. During prolonged cabinet crises throughout the spring of 1945 frequent absences of the minority deputies paralyzed all government activity and presented the danger of anarchy to the country.

One of the peculiar characteristics of the Majlis is that it acts in its plenary sessions as a credentials' committee. In practice this means that the parliament, after constituting itself, reviews the mandate of each deputy and decides whether the election was legally conducted. If irregularities are discovered, the Majlis may, by a majority vote, nullify the mandate of a newly elected deputy. This strange practice is dangerous in that it consumes considerable time, which could be spent more constructively, and places too strong a weapon in the hands of the majority. Theoretically no legal limit to the invalidation of mandates by the majority exists. Naturally, there must be an irregularity as the basis of accusation, but it is difficult to see where the line between an illegal procedure and a generally accepted custom may be drawn. In the Fourteenth Majlis a number of mandates of Communist deputies were rejected. This fact created an uproar in the Tudeh party ranks and led to violent demonstrations in the north. There was no doubt that in several cases the question of confirmation or rejection was predominandy political in nature, with

legal considerations strictly subordinate. In the case of the questioned mandate of Deputy Habibulla Dorri (Tudeh), thirty-two deputies voted for the confirmation of his seat, but the majority decided to invalidate it. In the case of the hotly debated mandate of the rightist leader Seyyid Zia ed-Din, twenty-nine deputies voted for its invalidation, but the majority resolved to confirm it. With few exceptions the deputies who voted in favor of Dorri voted against Zia ed-Din, which throws some light on the numerical strength of the minority (open to Soviet influences) in the beginning of the Fourteenth Majlis. Later the minority could occasionally muster more voices.

In short, we may say that the parliament in the main was repre-